

CLAIMS:

1. A recording/reproducing method for a recording/reproducing apparatus which records and reproduces contents on and from a storage medium,

said method comprising the step of updating history information in which content information of contents stored in the storage medium is associated with user information of a plurality of users using the recording/reproducing apparatus and in which a reproducing entry indicative of whether the users have reproduced the contents is contained, said history information being updated responsive to reproduction of the contents and in regard to the reproducing entry concerning a user who has reproduced the contents.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying the user information, registered in the recording/reproducing apparatus, so as to allow for selection of users using the recording/reproducing apparatus.

3. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

registering a user of the recording/reproducing apparatus in a storage area of the recording/reproducing

apparatus at or after the startup of the recording/reproducing apparatus; and

setting, when the user has recorded contents on the storage medium, a recording entry in the history information in regard to the user registered in the user registering step, so as to indicate that the user has recorded contents on the storage medium, or, when the user has reproduced contents from the storage medium, updating the reproducing entry in the history information in regard to the user registered in the user registering step, the setting or update being carried out at a point in between the recording/reproducing apparatus being started up and the recording/reproducing apparatus being turned off.

4. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of setting a deletion restriction entry in regard to a desired content item, the deletion restriction entry indicative of whether deletion of content is allowable or unallowable, and the deletion restriction entry being contained in the history information or being contained in the content information and associated with the history information.

5. The method as set forth in claim 1, further

comprising the steps of:

creating, based on the history information, a table in which contents represented by the content information and users represented by the user information are associated with each other; and

displaying the table.

6. A recording/reproducing method comprising the steps of:

entering and storing user information containing at least identification information specific to a user, the user information being entered and stored for at least one user of a recording/reproducing apparatus which records and reproduces contents on and from a storage medium;

storing history information in which the user registered in the user information is associated with the contents, the history information being stored for each content item recorded on the storage medium;

receiving a reproducing request for the recorded content item from a user registered in the user information;

checking the users contained in the history information with the user who has made the reproducing request, in regard to the content for which the reproducing request was made;

making, when the users accord, instructions for reproducing the content, and updating, after reproducing the content, the history information so that a combination of the content and identification information for specifying the user who has made the reproducing request includes additional information which indicates that the content has been reproduced; and

outputting information indicative of a relationship between (i) the identification information for specifying the user who has made the reproducing request, (ii) the content information, and (iii) the presence or absence of information which indicates that the content has been reproduced.

7. A recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing contents on and from a storage medium, said recording/reproducing apparatus comprising:

a user information managing section for managing user information concerning a plurality of users of the recording/reproducing apparatus; and

a history information managing section for managing history information in which content information of contents recorded on the storage medium is stored, and in which a reproducing entry indicative of whether the contents have been reproduced by users is contained,

wherein the history information managing section updates the reproducing entry responsive to reproduction of the contents and in regard to a user who has reproduced the contents.

8. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, further comprising:

a storage area, provided in the recording/reproducing apparatus, for enabling the user information managing section to register the user information; and

a display control section for displaying listings of users whose user information is stored in the storage area, so as to allow for user selection by users using the recording/reproducing apparatus.

9. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, comprising a user setting information,

wherein the history information managing section sets, when the user has recorded contents on the storage medium, a recording entry in the history information in regard to the user set in the user setting section, so as to indicate that the user has recorded contents on the storage medium, or the history information managing section updates, when the user has reproduced contents

from the storage medium, the reproducing entry in the history information in regard to the user set in the user setting section, the setting or update being carried out at the startup of the recording/reproducing apparatus or after the startup of the recording/reproducing apparatus.

10. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 7,

wherein the history information or the content information includes a deletion restriction entry indicative of whether deletion of content is allowable or unallowable, and the deletion restriction entry in the content information is associated with the history information, and

wherein said history information managing section sets the deletion restriction entry in regard to a desired content item.

11. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, comprising:

a table display section for creating, based on the history information, a table in which the user information managed by the user information managing section is associated with the content information of the contents recorded on the storage medium, and displaying the table.

12. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein the reproducing entry contained in the history information managed by the history information managing section includes an entry indicative of date and time that the content was reproduced by the user.

13. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein, when updating the reproducing entry for the user who has reproduced the content, the history information managing section sets the deletion restriction entry such that the user is allowed to delete the content.

14. The recording/reproducing apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein the deletion restriction entry set by the history information managing section also sets reproducing restriction for the users.

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